

**BOARD OF FINANCE
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS HEARING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2005**

Board of Finance Members Present: Robert K. Pagani-Chairman, Richard J. Cleary, Robert J. Clements, Vaughn E. Gerber, Mark A. Joyse, Barry C. Pinto

Selectmen Present: Dennis Milanovich-First Selectman, P. Charter, D. Frawley, M. Leighton, A. Leo Miller, N. Way

Others Present: G. Daigle, J. Snyder, A. Ugolik-Budget Advisory Members, N. DiCorleto-Fin Off, P. Michaud-DPW Dir, R. Packman-Supt of Schools, D. Roberson-Chmn BOE, M. Varney-Chief EVFD, V. Gambacorta-EVFD, J. Gage-Conser Comm., residents.

Chairman Robert Pagani opened the meeting at 7:32 pm.

He stated that this will be a very tight budget year and that if any additional funds are available there should be a priority list of items requested for funding.

First Selectman Dennis Milanovich presented the capital improvements request for fiscal year 2005-06. He stated that with a few exceptions, most of the items are within the 1% guideline as set by the Board of Finance. This capital improvements request is approximately \$7,500 more than last year, with the total under \$1 million.

The following items were presented for funding:

Road Construction

LOCIP \$101,760 was put in same as last year; this is funded by State of Ct. Unimproved roads \$100,000 same as last year. Road Overlay was backed into to make the total capital improvements come in under guidelines. This figure is \$238,038.

Building Construction

One item of \$40,000 being funded for renovation of the Tax Office. Due to some prepurchasing last year, we were able to fund this item lower than originally requested.

Building Repairs

Town Hall air conditioner replacement for \$36,255. This item was determined to be funded because it is a 30 year old system which is a Freon system that could be hazardous if it breaks. There is also a long term energy drain from a system this old.

Miscellaneous

The Revaluation which has begun was funded for \$62,700.

\$18,000 for parks and playground equipment upgrade.

The Crystal Lake School well replacement is being funded for \$265,000. This will go out to bid in the spring. There was some discussion about the well being planned for a place on the grounds that would not interfere with any possible expansion of the building. The superintendent stated that this is being considered and should not be an issue.

\$143,862 for the completion of the athletic fields at the High School and ADA compliance issues. This is the item that exceeds the 1% spending cap, but it was added so that the project can be completed on a timely basis this year.

Equipment Purchase

\$108,000 for a 4WD roadside mower. The labor to do the areas that this machine can get to makes this machine cost effective.

\$11,500 for Ellington Volunteer Fire Dept water shuttle, and \$24,000 for Intersection Preemptive system. Mr. Varney stated that this amount would finish off the town's traffic signals. \$160,000 for Ellington Volunteer Amb. Corps second ambulance replacement and \$21,000 for portable laptops, both items to be funded from their charging fund. During the meetings of the Capital Improvement Committee there was discussion that the Ambulance charging fund should not be funded down below \$75,000. The last item to be funded is \$26,545 for a Police cruiser.

Mr. Charter asked if the Board would consider moving the High School field item out of capital improvements and make it a separate additional appropriation from the general fund. This would require a town meeting.

Mr. Pagani asked why not leave it in the budget as it is. He plans to get the budget passed in a timely manner this year.

In closing Mr. Milanovich stated that the Board of Selectmen did their best to give a capital improvements budget that is within the guidelines. Mr. Pagani thanked him.

Discussion of Land Preservation Funding

Mr. Joyse stated that once again there is no funding for open space in the Capital Improvements Budget. Chairman Pagani opened up the discussion regarding the funding

for this. He stated that the grant money is almost used up and that he envisions a bond issue of \$2,000,000 to be spent over a period of 5-7 years. He also envisions a committee to oversee the expenditures. He feels there should be some funds put in the operating budget for land preservation in case the bond issue fails.

Mr. Charter stated that he is opposed to a bond issue for this use. He feels there is not an adequate plan in place.

Mr. Milanovich agreed with Mr. Charter. He thinks it's premature. He feels the plan of conservation and development and the revision of the zoning regulations should be completed first, which is in the area of \$150,000; these funds will be seen in the Planning and Zoning budgets. The Governor has put in \$5,000,000 for the entire state for farmland preservation and development rights, which the town may be able to get some funding from. Mr. Miller stated that the fee in lieu for open space needs to be more uniform in its requirements. Mr. Milanovich stated that the state statute regulates this fee.

Mr. Clements agreed that a plan needs to be in place for consistency.

Mr. Joyse stated that there is no plan because there has been no money. The Town will be playing catch up. The Conservation Commission is working on a plan and the money will not be spent right away. A plan can be made up after the funds are made available. He feels that the Conservation Commission has done a good job up to now with the funds available to them up to this point.

Mr. Cleary stated that the Town needs to make an effort to get this in motion and to get the Town in the market. We need to be proactive rather than reactive which is what we have been until now.

Mr. Michaud stated that land is going fast, especially since the year 2000.

Mr. Pinto stated he feels it is a good idea, but feels there are too many loose ends. He would be in favor of funding this on a yearly basis.

Mr. Gerber stated that the Conservation Commission has done a tremendous job and that this is an investment in the future of the Town.

Mr. Gage stated that he feels very strongly that the Town needs to acquire and protect open space. It is cost effective to the Town. It costs less to purchase open space than the services required for residential housing.

Mr. DiCorleto stated that the definition of open space needs to be put into the wording on the bond issue. For flexibility, he had the bond issue worded to include all possible future uses in the purchase of the Liebman property and he feels all future bond issues for property purchases should also include this wording.

Mr. Pagani then told the Board of Selectmen that in this year's budget, additional developer's fees were included in the revenue projections. However, the Board of Selectmen never implemented these; there was no action taken on them. He asked that they take action on this item. Builders and Developers need to pay their fair share.

Adjournment

MOTION (JOYSE) SECONDED (CLEARY) AND PASSED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:30 PM.

Submitted by _____
Lori Smith, Clerk